Black Lung Legal Research and Writing



Project Title	Black Lung Legal Research and Writing
Project Summary	The selected law student applicant(s) will perform a number of key tasks for the agency, including preparing updates to the Benefits Review Board's Black Lung Deskbook, drafting decisions in straightforward cases, and summarizing decisions of interest issued by the Board or the federal courts.
Country	United States

Project Description

The Board reviews appeals of Department of Labor administrative law judges' decisions rendered on claims filed under the Black Lung Benefits Act (BLBA), among other statues. Generally, a claim arising under the BLBA is filed by a coal miner who is alleging he or she is totally disabled due to coal workers' pneumoconiosis (black lung), or a survivor who is contending the miner died due to black lung. A claim is usually opposed by the responsible coal mine operator that most recently employed the miner for at least one year.

The selected law student applicant(s) will work under the direction of the Board's General Counsel to update the agency's Black Lung Deskbook. This research tool serves as a critical resource for Board staff and practicing attorneys, as it summarizes and incorporates noteworthy published decisions issued by the Board and the U.S. Courts of Appeals. The work of the selected applicant(s) will involve reading applicable Board and federal court decisions, summarizing the holdings of these decisions, and incorporating these summaries into the applicable sections of the Deskbook.

Other duties may include preparing straightforward decisions, like those the Board issues on fee petitions filed by claimants' attorneys who have successfully prosecuted their clients' cases. The selected applicant(s) may also be asked to summarize noteworthy Board or U.S. Courts of Appeals decisions issued during the internship period for circulation to staff or incorporation into the Deskbook. In addition, selected applicant(s) may be assigned to support a staff attorney in researching novel questions presented in a pending case. Finally, the agency will pursue other unique opportunities for the selected applicant(s), like virtually attending a hearing on a black lung claim before an administrative law judge. These assignments will provide the applicant(s) with important legal research and writing skills, especially in the areas of administrative law and workers' compensation law.

Required Skills or Interests

Skill(s)
Analytical writing
Editing and proofreading
Research

Additional Information

The agency is seeking one or two law students to begin in the coming term. For additional information about the Board, including its Deskbook, please visit https://www.dol.gov/agencies/brb.

Language Requirements

None